

**Sudbrook Paper Mill  
Sudbrook  
Monmouthshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

*for*  
**CgMs**


CA Project: 3771  
CA Report: 12079

April 2012

Sudbrook Paper Mill  
Sudbrook  
Monmouthshire

Archaeological Evaluation

CA Project: 3771  
CA Report: 12079

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date	17 April 2012
issue	01

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## SUMMARY

<b>Project Name:</b>	Sudbrook Paper Mill
<b>Location:</b>	Sudbrook, Monmouthshire
<b>NGR:</b>	ST 50400 87400
<b>Type:</b>	Evaluation
<b>Date:</b>	26-27 March 2012
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	To be deposited with the National Museum of Wales
<b>Site Code:</b>	SPM 12

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in March 2012 at Sudbrook Paper Mill, Sudbrook, Monmouthshire.

The evaluation identified a number of dumped deposits, a modern pit and a ditch, all of which are likely to be associated with the modern industrial use of the site.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In March 2012 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for CgMs at Sudbrook Paper Mill, Sudbrook, Monmouthshire (centred on NGR: ST 50400 87400; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken to accompany an outline planning application for residential development of the site.
- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Project Design (PD) produced by CA (2012) and approved by Mr Neil Maylan, Archaeological Planning Manager, GGAT Curatorial, archaeological advisors to Monmouthshire County Council. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 2008), the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (EH 2006). It was monitored by Mr Maylan, including a site visit on 26 March 2012. Due to the proximity of the trenches to Sudbrook Camp scheduled monument, Jonathan Berry of Cadw also attended the monitoring meeting.

### ***The site***

- 1.3 The site is located within the village of Sudbrook, between Newport and Chepstow, approximately 1.5km east of Caldicot on the north bank of the River Severn (Fig. 2). It is situated on a peninsula of sandstone bounded by the Rivers Severn and Neddon and lies at c. 14m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) in the north-east, and 13m AOD in the south-east. The ground falls away to the Gwent Levels in the west so that ground levels to the south of the Paper Mill fall to 7.5m AOD. The localised natural topography of the site has been changed by terracing to accommodate the buildings and structures associated with the paper mill. The underlying solid geology comprises a sandstone unit near the base of the Mercia Mudstone Group. Drift deposits of Estuarine Alluvium generally comprising blue-grey clay are present on the western part of the site. The Alluvium may also contain peat beds and submerged forests in places. To the east of the exposed bedrock are Second Terrace deposits, comprising gravel of unspecified thickness. (BGS 1981). Natural sand and gravel deposits were exposed during the evaluation.

### **Archaeological background**

- 1.4 The archaeological background of the development area is covered in detail by a recent desk-based assessment (Pugh 2012). Background relevant to the current report is summarised in the following paragraphs. The site lies immediately adjacent to the west side of the scheduled ancient monument of Sudbrook Camp and Chapel (MM048 (MON)). The camp is a multi-ramparted cliff-camp of probable late Iron Age origin, now much eroded on its seaward side, where it lies at the head of a low cliff. The eastern part of this cliff is now composed of rubble from the construction of the Severn Tunnel in 1873–86 which was dumped as a protection against erosion of the ruins of Sudbrook Chapel, which lies within the north-eastern defences of the camp. The defensive earthworks are best preserved to the west, adjacent to Sudbrook Paper Mill, but are much less intact on their north-eastern side, where they have been partly levelled and encroached upon by Sudbrook village (Sell *et al.* 2001).
- 1.5 Sudbrook Camp has been subject to past programmes of investigation, including that of the western defences by V. E. Nash-Williams in the 1930s (Nash-Williams 1939). In addition to the three extant banks and associated ditches, Nash-Williams intimated the presence of a possible fourth bank at the north-western end of his trench through the western defences (see Fig. 2). More recent work to re-evaluate Nash-Williams's work and also to evaluate the impact on the monument of the construction of a cycle track, together with monitoring work undertaken during the replacement of a fence line, cast doubt on this hypothesis (Sell 2001). A small trench (C; Fig. 2) identified material that could be interpreted as flattened bank material. However, subsequent work during the fence replacement concluded that this material may be associated with a hedge visible on aerial photographs of the site included in Nash-Williams's article (1939 plates I and II.1).
- 1.6 Little is known of the early history of Sudbrook Chapel (the Church of the Holy Trinity), except that the earliest work, in the nave, is thought to date to the 12th century, with the chancel being added in the 14th century and the south porch in the late 15th or early 16th centuries (Williams 1970/1, 23). It appears to have fallen out of use during the 16th or early 18th centuries.

### **Archaeological objectives**

- 1.7 The objectives of the evaluation were to establish the character, quality, date and extent of any archaeological remains or deposits surviving within the site. This information will assist Monmouthshire County Council in making an informed judgement on the significance of the archaeological resource, and the likely impact upon it of the proposed development, particularly for any remains of the putative fourth rampart associated with the Iron Age camp.

### **Methodology**

- 1.8 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of 2 trenches (Trench 1 which was 27m in length and Trench 2 which was 19m in length; each 2m wide) in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). Due to the presence of buried services it was necessary to relocate Trench 2 approximately 8m to the south-east of the original agreed location. Trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using a Leica Viva series SmartRover GPS and surveyed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 4 *Survey Manual* (2009).
- 1.9 The trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2007).
- 1.10 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with CA Technical Manual 2: *The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites* (2003) however no deposits were identified that required sampling. No artefacts were recovered during the evaluation.
- 1.11 The archive is currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble and will be deposited with the National Museum of Wales in due course.

## 2. RESULTS (FIGS 2-4)

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are to be found in Appendix A.

### ***Trench 1 (Figs 2 & 3)***

- 2.2 Gravel deposit 112 was identified at a depth of 1.9m below present ground level (bpgl) towards the south-eastern end of the trench. Limited excavation established that this material was overlain by a series of unstructured deposits comprising yellow sand (111), sandy gravel (113), silty clay (114 and 115) and orange sand and gravel (116). In the sondage where gravel deposit 112 was exposed sandy deposit 111 and deposits 113 and 114 measured approximately 0.65m in thickness. However deposit 114, together with 116 did extend below the base of the south-eastern end of the trench.
- 2.3 The surface of greyish-brown sandy gravel deposit 108 lay at a similar depth to that of 111 however any evidence of the relationship between the two had been completely removed by the construction of ditch 109. This feature was aligned north/south and measured 2m in width and at least 0.55m in depth, extending below the base of the trench. It was filled with silty clay deposit 110 which contained occasional gravel but no other visible inclusions. This material was in turn cut by presumed foundation trench 118 which contained concrete and brick footings 106.
- 2.4 Deposits 108, 111, 114 and 115, as well as concrete foundations 106, were sealed by up to 0.4m of grey silty clay, 104, which may represent redeposited alluvium. This was present along the whole length of the trench and was cut by pipe trench 117. At the north-western end of the trench, layer 104 was overlain by dark grey ashy material 103. This in turn, was sealed by a substantial deposit of loose wood chippings, up to 0.8m thick, which was present throughout the length of the trench. Modern surface layers 101 and 100 completed the sequence.



### **Trench 2 (Figs 2 & 4)**

- 2.5 The surface of natural orange sandy gravel substrate 207 was identified at a general depth of approximately 0.5m bpgl. A sondage excavated to a depth of 1.8m bpgl at the south-eastern end of the trench revealed a series of layers of orange and yellow sands and gravels extending below the limit of excavation.
- 2.6 The natural substrate was sealed by a layer of buried subsoil, 206, which measured a maximum of 0.4m in thickness. This was cut by pit 203 which measured at least 1.5m in length, 1.7m in width and was at least 0.8m deep. It contained two fills (204 and 205), the earliest of which (204) contained modern artefacts such as glass bottles, metal cans and china (noted, but not retained).
- 2.7 Pit 203 and layer 206 were sealed by modern surface deposits 201 and 200, which had a maximum combined thickness of approximately 0.2m.

## **3. DISCUSSION**

- 3.1 The results from Trench 2 of the present evaluation demonstrate that the natural substrate lies at a height of approximately 13.9m AOD, just 0.5m below existing ground level. No cut features, other than a modern pit, or other deposits that could possibly be construed as flattened bank material were exposed within this trench, suggesting that there is no evidence for a fourth circuit of defences of the Iron Age Camp extending into the proposed development area, as originally postulated by Nash Williams, but seemingly countered by later investigations (see 1.5 above).
- 3.2 The results from Trench 1, however, were slightly less straightforward. In the first instance, although the trench was deep (up to 2m in depth) and excavated to approximately 12.6m AOD, natural orange sands and gravels, as seen in Trench 2, were not exposed. This suggests that either there is a large variation in the natural topography, or that the area within which Trench 1 was located has been subject to extensive landscaping. In the absence of any dating evidence, interpretation of the earlier deposits within Trench 1 is difficult. Stratigraphically and compositionally, deposits 104 and above are demonstrably modern. It is therefore entirely possible that the unstructured deposits at the south-eastern end of the trench represent

dumped make-up material associated with landscaping for the paper mill, and that ditch 109 was a modern creation, constructed to drain the newly raised area. Similar results were recorded by Sell during the work on the fence relocation along the eastern boundary to the site in 1999 (Sell 2001).

- 3.3 In conclusion, the evaluation revealed no evidence to suggest Nash-Williams' postulated fourth circuit of defences existed, or that it extended into the proposed development area, and no significant archaeological remains were encountered in the course of the works. The deep deposits and ditch encountered in Trench 1 are most likely associated with landscaping associated with the later development of the paper mill on the site.

#### 4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Mark Brett, assisted by Anthony Beechey and Alex Thomson. The report was written by Mark Brett and the illustrations were prepared by Peter Moore. The archive has been compiled by Mark Brett, and prepared for deposition by James Johnson. The project was managed for CA by Simon Cox.

#### 5. REFERENCES

- BGS (British Geological Survey) 1981 Solid and Drift Geology, Sheet **250**; Chepstow, 1:50,000
- Nash-Williams, V E. 1939 'An Early Iron Age coastal camp at Sudbrook, near the Severn Tunnel, Monmouthshire', *Archaeol. Cambrensis* **88(2)**, 237-346
- Pugh, G. 2012 *Archaeological desk-based Assessment of the former Sudbrook Paper Mill, Sudbrook, Monmouthshire*. CgMs Consulting typescript report
- Sell, S. H., Gwilt, A. and Webster, P. 2001 'Recent Excavation and Survey Work at Sudbrook Camp, Portskewett, Monmouthshire', *Studia Celtica* **35**, 109-141
- Williams, D. H. 1970/1 'Sudbrook Village', *Monmouthshire Antiq.*

**APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS****Trench 1**

(Top of trench: 14.42m – 14.74m AOD)

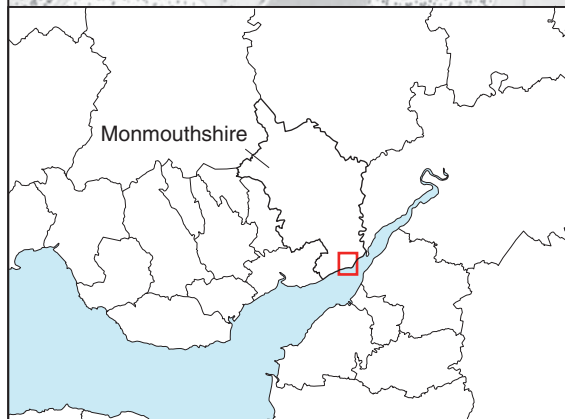
No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)
100	Layer	Surface. Loose scalplings.			<0.4
101	Layer	Ashy silt.			<0.2
102	Layer	Loose wood chippings/mulch.			<0.8
103	Layer	Dark grey ashy silty clay.			<0.15
104	Layer	Mid grey silty clay. ?Redeposited alluvium.			<0.4
105	Deposit	Modern ceramic pipe.			0.3
106	Deposit	Concrete ?foundation.			>0.5
107	Deposit	Modern ceramic pipe.		0.2	0.2
108	Layer	Greyish brown sandy gravel.			>0.6
109	Cut	Ditch. Aligned N/S.	>2	2	>0.55
110	Deposit	Fill of 109. Brownish-grey silty clay.			>0.55
111	Deposit	Mid yellow/greyish brown mottled sand with occasional gravel.			>0.65
112	Layer	Mid greyish brown gravel.			>0.1
113	Deposit	Greyish brown sand and gravel.			>0.3
114	Deposit	Mid grey silty clay with occasional gravel.			>0.55
115	Deposit	Mid brown silty clay with occasional gravel.			0.55
116	Deposit	Mid brownish orange silty sand and gravel.			>0.25
117	Cut	Modern pipe trench. Contains 105.	N/K	0.5	0.3
118	Cut	Foundation trench for 106.	>2	0.5	>0.5

**Trench 2**

(Top of trench: 14.15m – 14.44m AOD)

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)
200	Layer	Surface. Loose scalplings/concrete road.			<0.2
201	Layer	Ashy silt.			<0.1
203	Cut	Modern pit.	>1.5	1.75	>0.8
204	Deposit	Lower fill of 203.			>0.45
205	Deposit	Upper fill of 203.			<0.35
206	Layer	Yellowish grey silty clay. Buried subsoil.			<0.35
207	Layer	Natural substrate. Orange/yellow sands and gravels.			N/K





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#### PROJECT TITLE

Sudbrook Paper Mill, Sudbrook  
Monmouthshire

#### FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan

0 1km

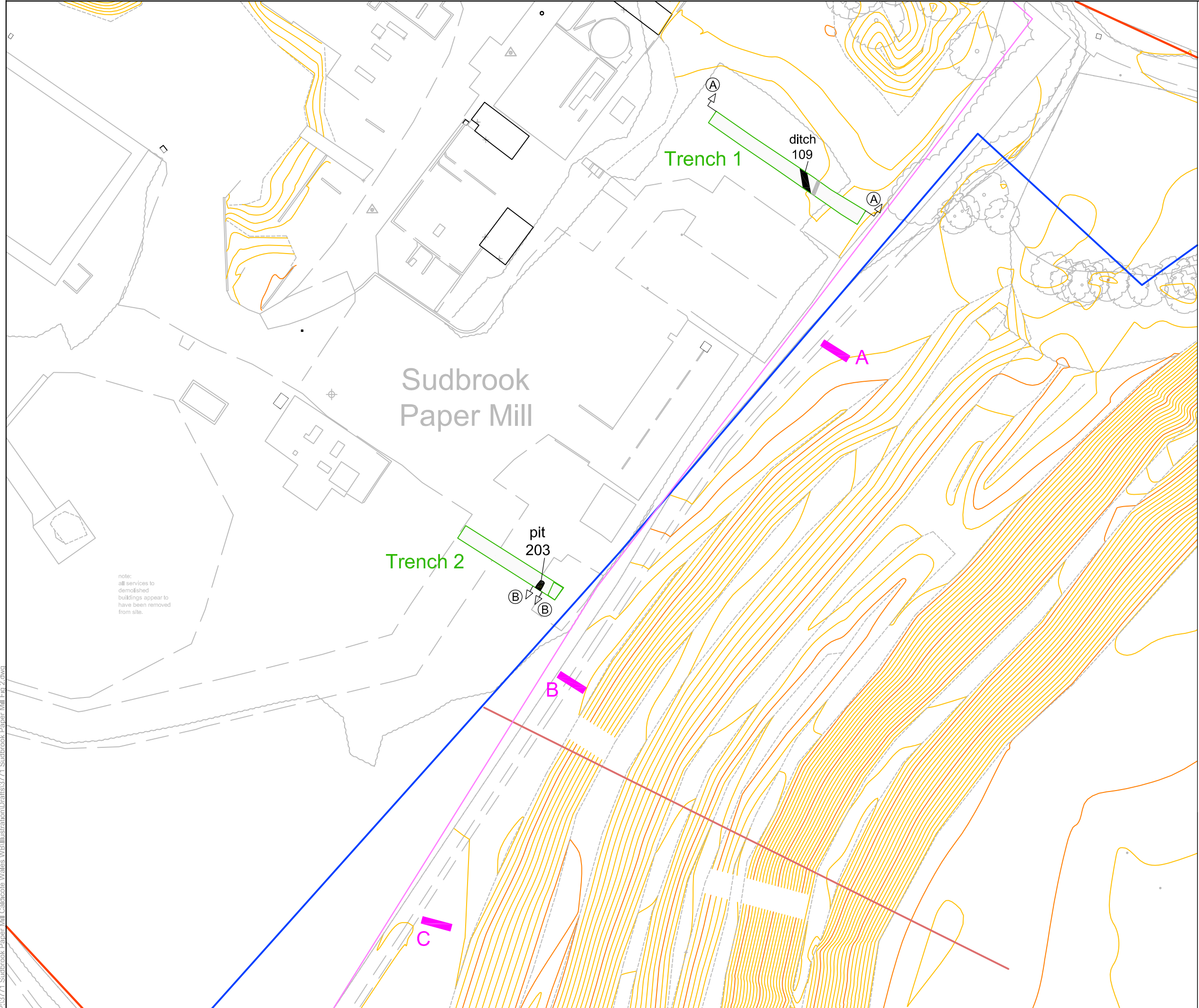
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FIGURE NO.

1





- site
- evaluation trench
- Scheduled Monument
- contour (main)
- contour (interval)
- modern
- previous evaluation trench (GGAT 1998)
- location of Nash-Williams's section through western defences (Nash-Williams 1939)
- fenceline monitored by GGAT 1999

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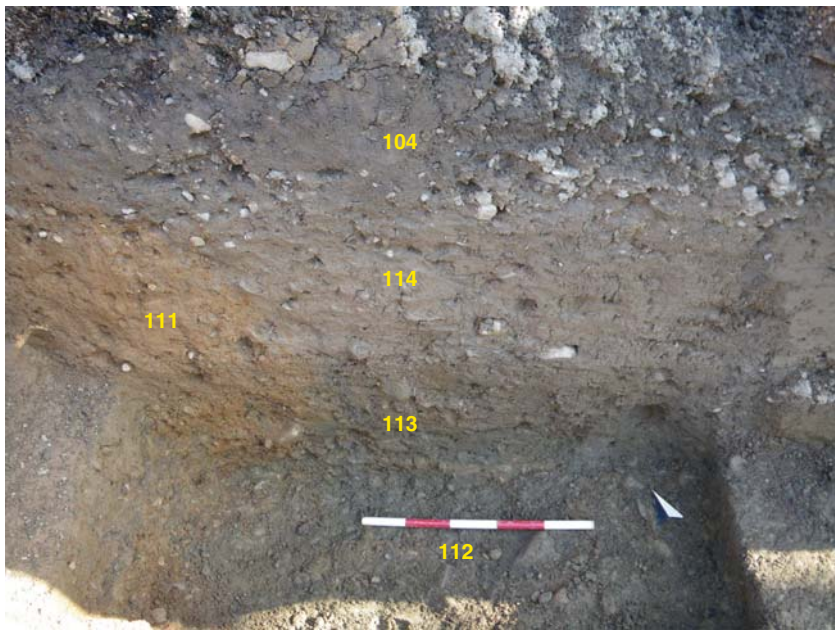
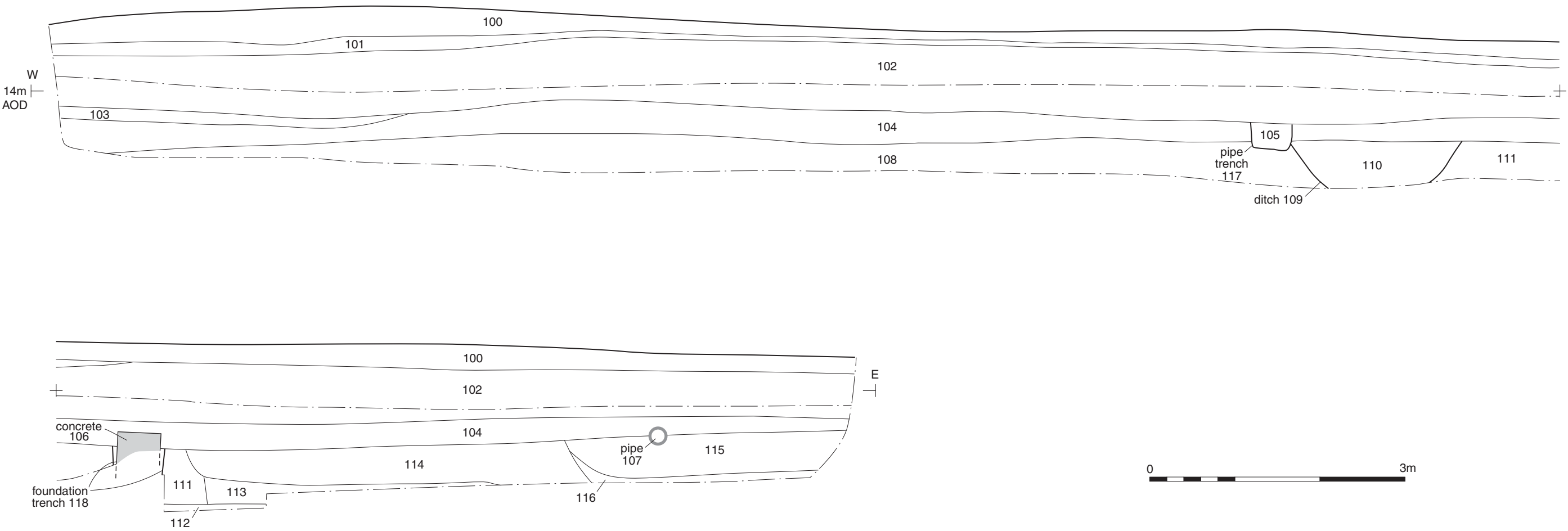
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FIGURE TITLE  
Trench location plan

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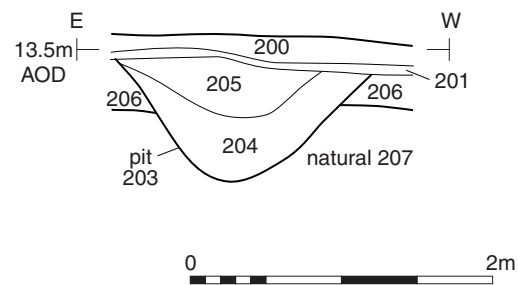
FIGURE NO.  
2

Section AA



Part of south-west facing section of Trench 1 (scale 0.5m)

## Section BB



Sondage at south-eastern end of Trench 2, showing natural deposits of sand and gravel (scales 1m)



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### FIGURE TITLE

**Trench 2: section BB and photograph**

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FIGURE NO.

**4**